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To Love All, to be the First to Love Page 2
The World Day of Youth Message Page 3
A Surprise Visit Page 14
Love Is Stronger Page 16
Hammarskjold: Champion of Peace Page 20

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4 1987 VOLUME 26 APRIL

2 *THE SPIRITUALITY OF UNITY: a reflection by Chiara Lubich.*

3 *WORLD DAY OF YOUTH MESS from Pope John Paul II.*

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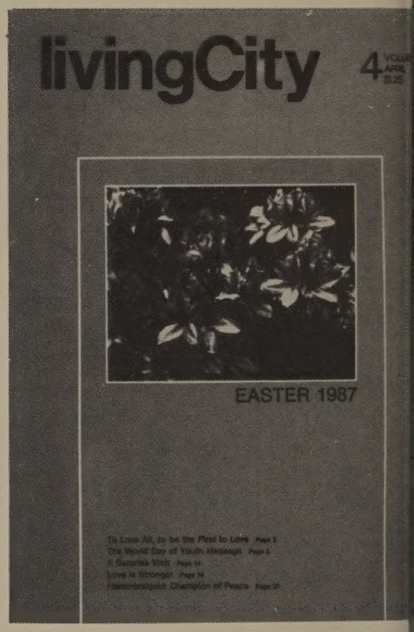

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THE CHALLENGE OF A SPECIAL MOMENT: members of the New Family Movement of the Focolare share how they face the challenge of the adolescent years.

14 *A SURPRISE VISIT: Pope John Paul II visits the new Mariapolis Center at Castelgandolfo.*

16 *LOVE IS STRONGER: we will present the new book by Matteo Silvan in installments.*

CONTENTS

Chiara Lubich	To love all, to be the first to love	2
Pope John Paul II	The world day of youth message	3
compiled by Phyllis Scaringe	The challenge of a special moment - part VI	9
Guglielmo Boselli	A surprise visit	14
Matteo Silvan	Love is stronger	16
Hermann J. Benning	Hammarskjold: champion of peace	20

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Dialogue	6
Genfest 1987	8
Mariapolis 1987	13
Today	22
Word of life	24
Experiences of life	25

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To love all, to be the first to love

A Word of Life very dear to us which we recently published a commentary on says: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come" (2 Cor 5:12). It speaks of the new man, the new self, who, through baptism and living the faith, dwells in us and clears away "the old self."

The new self—with a new way of looking at things, a new way of acting, of loving—has replaced the old way of thinking, of acting in us. The new self, however, always has need to be kept alive and this is done by allowing ourselves to be filled with supernatural love. In order for the new self to freely live in us, it would be helpful to ask ourselves: What is the nature of this supernatural love? How is it different from the love that the old self can have? What are its main characteristics?

Since supernatural love is a participation in the very love that is in God, that is God, it is different from human love in an infinite variety of ways, but above all in two. Human love makes distinctions, it is inclined to favor one person over another, it loves certain people—for example, relatives, those who are well educated, rich, beautiful, highly esteemed, healthy, or young, those of a certain race or category—and does not love the others as much.

Divine love, instead, loves everyone; it is universal. Every person on earth, if he or she is a believer, is thoroughly convinced of this, to the point that he or she would never feel are excluded from the love of God.

The second difference is that with human love, people tend to love when they are loved in return; and even when it is a very beautiful love, they love something of themselves in the other. There is always a selfish element in human love, or we love when our own best interest prompts us to.

Divine love, supernatural love, instead, is freely given and is the first to love. Therefore, if we want the new self to live in us, if we want to keep the flame of supernatural love lit in us, we too must love everyone and be the first to love. In short, we must be like Jesus, another little Jesus.

Jesus died on the cross for everyone; his love was universal and by his death he was certainly the first to love.

If we take advantage of every opportunity to put into action this new love that loves everyone and is the first to love we will be "a new creation" and we will place our stone for the construction of a new world. The old world will notice it and, finding Jesus in us, it will believe in him and will be attracted to him.

Chiara Lubich

POPE JOHN PAUL II TO THE YOUTH

Dear young people, my friends,

The theme of this World Day places before our eyes the witness of the apostle St. John, when he exclaims: "We ourselves have known and put our faith in God's love towards ourselves" (1 Jn 4:16).

In this regard, I would like to remind you of a thought I expressed in my first Encyclical "Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it" (Redemptor Hominis, 10). And how much more this reality holds good for the life of the young during this phase of special responsibility and hope, development of the person, definition of the meaning and the great ideals and projects of life, and aspiration to truth and to the attainment of genuine happiness! It is in this period of our life that we most have a need to feel ourselves recognized, supported, listened to and loved. You know very well, in the depths of your heart that the satisfactions afforded by a superficial hedonism are ephemeral and leave nothing but emptyness in our soul; that it is illusory to enclose ourselves in the shell of our own egoism; that all indifference and scepticism contradict the noble aspirations of a love that knows no frontiers; and that the temptations of violence and ideologies which deny God can only lead to a dead end.

The World Day of Youth this year will be celebrated in Buenos Aires. The Pope will speak to throngs of young people in the "continent of hope" as he calls South America because the majority of the population is young. It is to "all young people everywhere" however that the Pope is addressing himself in his message, "from North to South, from the East and the West for it is they who will be the men and women of the year 2000 and whom the Church recognizes and welcomes with hope."

(the words of the Pope prepared at Advent time)

Since man can neither live nor understand himself without love, I want to appeal to you to grow in humanity, to give absolute priority to the values of the spirit, and to transform yourselves into "new men" by increasingly recognising and accepting the presence of God in your life: the presence of a God who is Love; of a Father who loves each one of us for the whole of eternity, who created us by love and who loved us so much that he gave up his only Son to forgive us our sins, to reconcile us to Him, and to enable us to live with Him in a communion of love which will never end. The World Day of Youth should therefore prepare us all to accept this gift of the love of God by which we are transformed and by which we are saved. The world anxiously awaits our witness of love, a ►

witness born from a deep personal conviction and a sincere act of love and faith in the Risen Christ. This is what is meant by experiencing love and believing in it.

Our celebrations will also have a clearly community dimensions. This is an inescapable need of the love of God and the communion of those who feel themselves to be sons of the same Father, brothers in Jesus Christ and united by the power of the Spirit. By forming part of the great family of the redeemed and by being living members of the Church, you will experience, during this World Day, the enthusiasm and joy of the love of God by which you are called to unity and solidarity. This is a call that excludes no one. On the contrary, it is one that transcends frontiers and is addressed to all young people without distinction. It is a call that strengthens and renews the bonds by which young people are united. In these conditions, it is essential that the bonds that unite them be particularly strong and operative with the young who are suffering from unemployment, who are living in poverty or solitude, who feel themselves marginalized or who bear the heavy cross of sickness. It is essential, too, that this message of friendship also reach those who do not accept religious faith. Charity does not compromise with error, but it goes out towards everyone to open up the paths to conversion. How splendid and luminous are the words addressed to us in this respect by St.

Paul in his hymn to charity! (cf. 1 Cor 13). May they be for you a program of conduct and resolute commitment for your present and future life!

The love of God poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom 5:5) must deepen our awareness of the blatant threats posed by hunger and war, the scandalous disparities between opulent minorities and poor peoples, the violations of human rights and fundamental human liberties, including man's right to religious freedom, and actual or potential manipulations of his dignity. I deeply and strongly felt the presence and prayer of young people on the occasion of the World Day of Prayer for Peace held at Assisi on October 27, 1986 in which the representatives of the various Christian confessions and religions of the world participated.

More than ever, it is vitally important that the enormous scientific and technological advances of our time be directed, with moral wisdom, at the well-being of the whole of man and all men. The gravity, urgency and complexity of current problems and challenges demand of the new generations the necessary capacity and competence in the various fields, but the integral well-being of man, created in the image of God and called to an eternal destiny, must be placed above partial interests and viewpoints. It is in Christ that the love of God and the sublime dignity of man have been fully revealed to us. May Jesus be the "cornerstone" (cf. Eph 2:20) of your life and of the new civilization

you are called to build in a spirit of generous solidarity and sharing. No authentic human growth in peace and justice, in truth and freedom, can be achieved without the presence of Christ and his salvific power.

The building of a civilization of love requires strong and persevering characters, ready for self-sacrifice and anxious to open up new paths of human co-existence by overcoming divisions and the various forms of materialism. This is a responsibility of the young people of today who will be the men and women of tomorrow, at the dawn of the third Christian millennium.

In joyful anticipation of our meeting, I urge you all to undergo a deep and meditated spiritual preparation which may increase the ecclesial impetus of the World Day. Start out on the road! May your journey be marked by prayer, study, dialogue and the desire for conversion and a better life. Go forward united with each other in your parishes and Christian communities, in your associations and apostolic movements. May yours be an attitude of acceptance and hope, in harmony with the period of Advent we are beginning! The liturgy of this first Sunday reminds us, in the words of St. Paul, that "the time has come" and exhorts us to "give up all the things we prefer to do under cover of the dark" and to "arm ourselves in the Lord Jesus Christ" (cf. Rom 13:11-14).

After sending a special greeting to the youth of Argentina and praising their effort towards "peace in justice and truth" the Pope continues....

I urge all young men and women throughout the world to celebrate the next World Day of Youth on Palm Sunday 1987 with particular intensity and hope. And I entrust its preparation and its fruits to Mary, the young Virgin of Nazareth, the humble servant of the Lord who believed in the love of the Father and gave us Christ, "our Peace" (cf. Eph 2:14).

Dear young people, my friends: be witnesses to the love of God, sowers of hope and builders of peace.

In the name of the Lord Jesus, I bless you with all my affection.

From the Vatican, 30 November 1986
The First Sunday of Advent

John Paul II

ECUMENICAL NEWS

London: Anglicans in Synod

In November 1986 the General Synod of the Church of England formed of three houses: bishops, clergy, laity met in London. The Final Report of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC I) was one of the documents the Synod made decisions on. The ARCIC Report included three declarations prepared over twelve years of work (1970-1982) by the commission on the Eucharist, the ministry and orders, and authority in the Church. The Synod had to address the issue of whether the contents of the declaration corresponded or not with the faith professed by the Church of England. (The Catholic Church is also in the process of reviewing the document).

The opinion of the Synod was very positive about the declaration on the Eucharist and on that of ministry and orders and more restrictive on the declaration regarding authority in the Church. "For we Anglicans, the most difficult thing to accept in the Roman Catholic Church is the papacy," commented Anglican Bishop Mark Santer, co-chairman of the new commission ARCIC II.

In the general discussion Archbishop Runcie, primate of the Church of England, more than once referred to his experience of being with Pope John Paul II during the World Day of Prayer for Peace. "In Assisi, I saw the possibility of a new style of papacy. A primacy which is more in line with what is expressed in the documents of ARCIC and is not a monarchy.... Whether one likes it or not there is only one Church, only one bishop who can truly call together such a wide representation of Christian leaders. Baptists and Orthodox, Reformed and Quakers, Methodists and Lutherans, the Oriental Churches and Anglicans, including the Roman Catholic Church.... Rome has a certain historic role which we cannot ignore.... There are those who still believe the myth that Rome never changes. I ask myself if those who say that ever speak to Catholics."

Bucharest: A New Patriarch

On Sunday November 16, 1986 the enthroning of the new patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, His Beatitude Teoctist Arapas, who was elected on November 9, took place in Bucharest. He is a 71 year old monk who was bishop of Arad, metropolitan of Oltenia, and since 1977, the metropolitan of Moldavia. He succeeds Patriarch Justin who died last July 31 after a nine year patriarchate.

At the solemn liturgy were representatives of all the patriarchates and Orthodox Churches as well as numerous delegations of other Churches and Christian world commissions. Cardinal Willebrands and Bishop Fortino from the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity brought "the prayers and support of the Church of Rome" and emphasized, among other things, the positive role played by the Romanian Orthodox delegation in the international theological dialogue between Catholics and Orthodox. For his part, the new patriarch repeated his commitment to continue this dialogue with the same dedication.

The Romanian Orthodox Church—according to the *Handbook of Member Churches* of the World Council of Churches—counts 17 million members.

Metropolitan Damaskinos

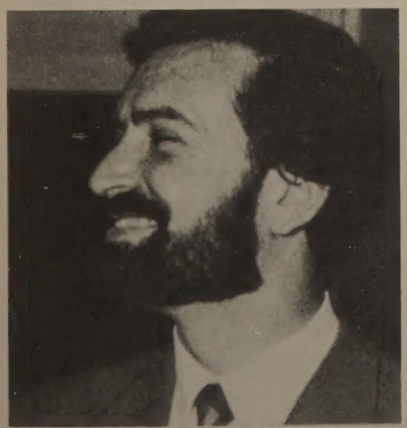
Chambesy: A Panorthodox Conference

From October 28 to November 6, 1986 in Chambesy, Switzerland at the Center of the Orthodox Patriarchate, representatives of the fourteen Orthodox Churches met for the third panorthodox pre-conciliar conference in preparation for the "Holy and Great Synod" of the Orthodox Church. The conference is one of a long series of preparatory meetings coordinated

by Metropolitan Damaskinos in Switzerland for the purpose of examining documents on the ten themes that will be on the agenda: The Church Calendar (not all Orthodox follow the same liturgical calendar); ecclesiastical ordinances for marriage; ordinances concerning fasting; relations of the Orthodox Church and the rest of the world; Orthodoxy and the ecumenical movement; problems related to peace, freedom, brotherhood, human rights and racial discrimination; the definitions and procedures for agreement in the autocephaly Orthodox Churches; the Orthodox in the diaspora; the diptychs (liturgical regulations).

For the first time, *Izvestia*, the Soviet Union newspaper, published news of the conference (on October 30, 1986) and of the fact that the representative of the Russian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Philaret of Kiev, participated in it.

Gabriella Fallacara



One of the panelists at the Conference: Rabbi David Rosen from Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

The historic meeting between Pope John Paul II and Rabbi Elio Toaff in front of the synagogue of Rome.

RELIGIONS

Jews and Catholics: an important new step

A meeting held in Rome last November marked a new and important step in Catholic-Jewish relations. It was the second International Conference and its theme was "Salvation and Redemption." It represented Jewish and Catholic thought as reflected in tradition and by contemporary thinkers.

On this occasion Dr. Joseph Lichten, the representative of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, an organization which fights anti-semitism and works to defend human rights, was given the pontifical award of the Order of St. Gregory the Great for significant merit for his "moral, civic and religious dedication." Dr. Lichten is among the most important Jewish figures in Jewish-Catholic relations over the past decades. His work played a key role in the preparatory phases of "Nostra Aetate," the declaration on relations between the Catholic Church and other religions.

In the work sessions of the conference, Rabbis David Rosen of Jerusalem and Gordon Tucker of New York discussed the essential points characterizing Jewish thought on the conference theme: on one hand the reality of God who freely grants redemption because God is the Redeemer; on the other, the need for human beings to live according to the commandments and study them with religious dedication. Also, we must repent for our transgressions so as to re-establish our relationship with God.

In addition, the fact that God initiates redemption does not limit humanity's freedom of action, including repentence. Nevertheless, salvation and redemption—either personal or national (i.e. of the People in its land)—is fundamentally performed through the mercy and the love of God.

Redemption and salvation in relation to the Messianic Age or to the task of the Messiah has not been dealt with systematically in Jewish tradition. Two points of view, seemingly in opposition to one another, emerge in the development of Jewish tradition: the Messianic Age will be fulfilled by God; ►

GENFEST 1987

For a United World

The 1987 North American GENFEST
will be held
at Mariapolis Luminosa
Hyde Park, New York
on April 26

"The Youth for a United World Movement: what is its purpose? To contribute towards uniting the world. What is its method? To follow all roads that lead to unity. What is its spirit? Christ, whom each one of you will seek to bring alive again in your hearts by living the Word. We will walk with determination along the various roads that offer solutions to the divided world by uniting it...."
(from Chiara Lubich's address to the participants of the 1985 Genfest)

Contact the Focolare Center nearest you for details.
(see inside back cover for addresses)

the Messianic Age will be fulfilled by man.

This emphasis on the supernatural intervention or on the human one co-exist within several different currents of Jewish thought. These currents of thought express and synthesize this double emphasis in the following ways: 1) The conservative view is more rooted to ancient Jewish thought and connects salvation to personal and collective commitment to the Torah. The historical aspect is not a concrete part of this view. A mystical trend sees in the sanctity of the human being, in his or her obedience to and communion with God, the capacity to initiate cosmic salvation to hasten the arrival of the Messianic Age. 2) A utopian tendency sees the redemption as a breaking through of a totally new order brought about by the Messiah and therefore not maturing gradually through history. 3) A third current appeals to human commitment, since the Messianic Age can also be considered as the constructive action of man leading to a redeemed Israel and also to a "re-established" humanity—re-established according to God's original plan. Developed by Zionism this Messianic view corresponds to themes in liberation theology as Rabbi Leon Klenicki noted.

Catholic theology on the theme of redemption and salvation was presented by theologians from the United States, Germany, and two Pontifical Universities in Rome, the Gregorian and the Angelicum. The contribution of Jewish and Catholic panelists was very enlightening as one might hope for an interreligious dialogue.

The purpose of the presentations was to increase knowledge of one another, to correctly present the faith of the other and to further a joint commitment to build peace. Rabbi Ronald B. Sobel of New York brought a precious gift from Jerusalem to Pope John Paul II in symbol of peace and in his remarks to the Holy Father expressed the thought that "it is incumbent upon us all, both Christian and Jew, to live as if peace in the world depended on our every gesture, on our every action." This was the kind of cordiality which characterized the conference.

Annamaria Pericoli

FAMILY LIFE

Weakened family life is one of the greatest social ills of our time.
The "New Family" Movement has as its aim to bring the Focolare spirit of unity into family life, so that each family will be deeply united within itself and with other families.

THE CHALLENGE OF A SPECIAL MOMENT

Part VI

We continue our series of articles on a particular phase of family life, that is, how parents relate to their young adult children. Teenagers sort out and test the values passed on to them and it is not unusual that they find it difficult to communicate across the abyss of a generation.
Living City asked members of the New Family Movement to share how they tried to meet the challenge.

(The names have been changed by the editor.)

Compiled by PHYLLIS SCARINGE

Terry: We have three children and a foster child. If we were asked which was the most difficult period of all we'd have to say it was with the first child.

Steve: At 15 our eldest, Jim, began to resent his dependence upon us, he wanted to be his own boss. He decided he could do anything he wanted. He started dating and staying out late at night. There were many times when we really did not know what to do. He hung around with friends who were experimenting with marijuana, alcohol and we didn't know what else. I wanted to make sure he knew that he was doing wrong. I was very firm with him. I would wait up for him at night by the door. I'd look him in the eyes to see if he had been drinking and I even pinned him against the wall when he tried to avoid me. But the tougher I got the more the distance between us grew.

When he was little we had had such great times together, fishing and the like. We used to freely communicate. Now all communication was shut down and it went from bad to worse. I was so sure I shouldn't let him get away with anything. After a very long time I began to realize I was judging him and I shouldn't judge anyone. I was assuming that he was doing something wrong even when he wasn't, and I was responding to him on my assumptions. Terry had been trying to tell me I shouldn't react so strongly but I'm stubborn. Finally, it hit me that I had to accept him the way he was, and love him even if he wasn't behaving the way he should. It was very hard for me. I remember at the kitchen table trying to hold my tongue. I still saw all the things I saw before but I started trying to treat him with the same respect that I did in the past regardless of what I thought or knew he was doing. During that period a dialogue began and grew and grew to the point that I could eventually talk in an objective way. I talked about his life, what he was doing to himself, and this time it had an impact; he was listening. I realized that it wasn't so much that I had to make him change; I had to change. I had to not judge and love and accept him as he was regardless of how I felt. His behavior turned around after that. Now that son is one of the most sensitive to family unity, sensitive to his brothers and us.

Terry: It was very hard to see him mess up his life. It was a struggle to keep the relation- ►

"I learned that loud music to a teenager is not the same as loud music to an adult. We were continually discussing the volume of his amplifier. Many times I was tempted to just pull out all the wires."

ship open so that he could come to us when he needed us, and to not keep re-acting according to our feelings. I remember graduation day. We didn't know if he would get his diploma or not. We continued to believe in God's love for him and I think that was so important. He felt that we believed ti and somewhere within him he could believe it, too. His closest friend dropped out of school and wound up in jail instead our son—by some miracle—decided he wanted to go to college.

Steve: Even though he was rebellious towards us, there were signs that he had not rejected all the values he had learned at home. If one of his friends had too much to drink he would drive him home or bring him to sleep at our house. It was a surprise to hear that those friends also decided to go on to college. Three out of the four of them graduated. I realized that just as one person can pull a group down, one person can help a group get back on the track.

Terry: Another son, Joey, blossomed in his later years of high school and decided that he liked rock and roll music. He used to be a very quiet boy until he bought an electric guitar and together with his friends formed a band playing hard rock. His grades started to suffer but there was no way to make him understand that there was more to life than playing music. Again Steve and I reminded each other that we had to love this child, too, the way he was. We began to understand that we do not own our children, they belong to God and we tried to live accordingly. We were very much aware of our responsibility to oversee his school work, etc. but we also had to leave him free even if it meant free to make his own mistakes.

There were times when we would sit down together to talk. He would come home from school at 11:00 o'clock in the morning (since he was taking only the minimum number of required courses) and play his rock music all day long. He was beyond reality.

The music was so loud that at times the neighbors two blocks away would call and ask if we could please lower the amplifier. I would apologize to our neighbors but I learned that loud music to a teenager is not the same as loud music to an adult. We were continually discussing the volume of his amplifier. Many times I was tempted to just pull out all the wires. Since we were at two levels of understanding about what loud was, it was a conversion for me everytime I had to go to his bedroom to remind him.

When he got out of high school he did not know what he wanted to do. He decided that rather than go to college he would take a year off and work. It was a rough year for him but he realized on his own that if he wanted a better job he'd need the schooling for it. Even though it was painful to watch him suffer the consequences of his own choices we knew he had to learn in his own time. One day he came to us and said that instead of playing rock music he should have been studying and taking the courses he needed. He was now ready.

Steve: One time Terry noticed that one of Joey's regular friends did not come around anymore and she asked why. That friend had gotten into drugs and Joey had stopped hanging around with him.

Terry and I tried to understand what gave him the strength to not follow his peers into drugs and we realized it must have been because of the strong relationship he had had with the Gen[1]. He would drive forty miles to meet with them. The values and standards among the Gen enabled them to create their own peer system.

Terry: Years later, one of his Gen friends, Mike, discovered that his mother had cancer and called up Joey. Mike's father let us know how grateful he was that his son was able to open up about it. It had upset him very much but he was keeping all his feelings bottled up. I felt that it was a fruit of that supernatural love that they had shared when they were young and with the Gen. Their relationship remained on a different level than all the other friends they had.

Steve: Our third son, Brian, had a hard time making up his mind. He seemed to let his life be led by circumstances. If someone pulled him in one direction, he'd go that way; if he was pulled in another direction he'd follow. This was where I made another mistake.

He was graduating high school and he didn't know what he wanted to do. I thought I should give him some direction. Brian really has a lot of talent for working with his hands. I suggested he become a mechanical engineer and I continued to push him in that direction. He took up mechanical engineering in college but I could tell that he wasn't liking it. He was doing it only for me. At a certain point he said to me he would prefer to be a simple mechanic.

Terry: Steve and I talked it over and I told him: "Steve, if he says that is what he wants to do, rejoice." So we really made an effort to rejoice.

Steve: I was happy though because it was the first time he made a choice for himself. He was surprised that I was so delighted. It was something he wanted to do and he got excellent grades.

Terry: I believe it was important to help our children understand that there is a plan of God for each one of us. Then, as they grow up, they will—more or less consciously—look for it themselves in what they do.

Steve: When they were about 8 or 9 years old we made another decision. Terry always took care of us and the house. At this point, though, I thought that the boys should learn to help around the house. Terry would rather have done the dishes herself rather than have them break dishes but in time she could enjoy letting them do them.

We gradually gave them other responsibilities. One would vacuum the living room and clean the washroom, another would dust and clean a bedroom. They had to keep their bedrooms in order. The chores continued on through their adolescent years and regardless of what they had to do—study, or go out on a date—they still had to do them. I think it helped them be more responsible. In fact when Jerry,

"I came home with the intention of resting ... when my son asked me to help him pull the motor out of his car."

"I thought the boys should learn to help around the house. Terry, though, would have preferred doing the dishes herself rather than hear the boys break them."

our foster son, came to live with us, he had to do the same. He learned through the example of the other boys to do his share and they learned things from him like his good study habits, for example. They learned from each other.

Steve: Jerry came to live with us when he was fifteen years old after his parents died. He had lived in the city all his life. When he moved in with us, he must have expected us to live like the other people around us in the suburbs who take winter vacations in Florida, and the like. Instead our lifestyle is very different. We live according to what we absolutely need and not according to all we might have. We keep a strict budget for food and everything. We're open to helping others in need. After a long time he understood.

Terry: I tried to communicate to Jerry the fact that he could not just take off and go wherever he wanted just because he had the money. He saw us budgeting our money and gradually think he learned watching how we spent it. We never picked extravagant or showy clothes; there was a limit to what we spent even if we could have afforded more.

The adjustment was difficult for Jerry. He had grown up as an only child and now he was one of four. Since he lost his parents, whom he loved and who loved him, he was afraid to give love. So even though the boys accepted him and thought of him as their brother, it took years before he really felt a part of the family. We disciplined him as if he were our own son. At first he was surprised but he never gave us trouble for that because he felt that we were trying to love him.

He communicated a lot then especially with me, while Steve found he had to keep reaffirming and reassuring Jerry that he loved him. Isn't that true, Steve?

Steve: When Jerry joined us, he became the oldest child I didn't have the experience of having sons that age yet. I was able to be more understanding with the others who came after Jerry and our eldest, Jim. That adolescent stage of becoming independent is a healthy and beautiful phase but I was very strict, strong on curfews, for example, and it was particularly hard on them.

Terry: Even though Jerry lives on his own now he always remembers us and often comes to visit. He is just like a real son. After a recent visit he called and said he felt so much at peace in our house. The relationship continues to grow.

Steve: Through the children we came in contact with their friends and very often their families. One time one of the boys' friends came over and spent an evening with us, and went back home and told his mother that there was no fighting in our house. That mother wanted to meet us and she and her husband became part of the New Families of the Focolare.

Terry: Dinner is a festive time in our house and their older son would come and just soak up the atmosphere. Weeks later the mother told us how happy her son was when he came home from our house.

Steve: Even the father used to come over with the son to visit and sit and talk for hours. I remember thinking I had so many things to do but I would just sit and forget everything else. One time our two families decided to go to a play together and after the play we went to a pizza place and just talked. It was a simple and beautiful evening. We found out that the next day the father went to confession after a very long time.

In another family the mother was very hard on her children. In time, the more she lived this life of unity, harmony in the family was restored. The whole family noticed the change.

I have the tendency to get involved in something I feel is important and not want to be interrupted. But at a certain point while the children were still young I understood that to love each one of them meant to give myself to them one hun-

(Continued on page 28)

MARIAPOLIS 1987

The Mariapolis gatherings are the summer meetings of the Focolare, held every year, for those who wish to come into contact with it.

For one week the Mariapolis offers to hundreds of people of all ages and walks of life a very full program that includes general sessions with talks on the spirituality of unity, sharing of experiences in living this spirituality, documentaries, meetings in small sharing groups and recreational programs. The Mariapolis is a time for prayer and recollection. The celebration of the Eucharist is at the center of each day and all participants gather together at the conclusion of the activities for evening prayer.

Children have separate activities which involve them in the life of the Mariapolis through various spiritual and recreational programs. Special programs are available for teenagers as well.

The week, however, is more than the sum of its parts. It is an experience of how life, also every day life, can be transformed if love and unity are its foundation. When the Mariapolis ends, people find that it was not only a tremendously enjoyable week, but they have experienced a way of living that they will be able to bring back home.

SOUTHWEST:

Las Cruces State University
Las Cruces, New Mexico
June 28, after supper -
July 4, after breakfast

MIDWEST:

Hope College
Holland, Michigan
July 12, after supper -
July 18, after breakfast

EAST COAST:

Mariapolis Luminosa
Hyde Park, New York
July 19, after supper -
July 25, after breakfast

Mariapolis Luminosa
Hyde Park, New York

July 26 including supper -
August 9, after lunch

Space is very limited.
If you are interested in attending please contact the Focolare Center nearest you.
(See inside back cover for addresses)

A Surprise Visit

The 700 focolarini mainly from the men Centers of Europe had a very pleasant surprise during their annual meeting on Sunday, December 28.

Pope John Paul II who was spending a few days of rest at his residence in Castelgandolfo, after reciting the Angelus with a group of pilgrims, decided to cross through his garden and pay a visit to the new Mariapolis Center of the Focolare!.

The meeting being held there was focusing on the effects of the Word of God when it is lived individually and together. It was one of the very first gatherings taking place in the Center after the complex task of remodeling what was at one time the Pope's audience hall at Castelgandolfo. Three years ago the Holy Father offered the building to the Focolare Movement as a sign of his particular trust. Now the work of renovation is nearing completion and the new Center has been given the name "Center—Mary of the Focolarini." It was the Holy Father himself to use this expression in speaking about the Marian spirit of the Movement.

The air was filled with joy, enthusiasm and deep emotion as the pope walked into the hall. "This hall is more beautiful, more elegant, and certainly more useful," he commented as he spoke extemporaneously answering Chiara Lubich's greetings.

It was the feast of the Holy Family. John Paul II linked this to the meaning of Mariapolis (city of Mary) which aims at bearing witness to the presence of Mary in the Church. He stopped frequently to talk to the focolarini who reached out to him as he was coming into the hall and as he left.

The official inauguration of the Center will take place in May when the work of renovation will be completed. In the meantime, what a special gift it was this unscheduled visit of the Pope, a most welcome gesture of a father, a moment of celebration. We could not hope or dream of a better beginning!

Guglielmo Boselli

John Paul II at the new Mariapolis Center in Castelgandolfo

LOVE IS STRONGER

The Sudden Laceration
Part I

Lazarus Come Out, *a book that many of our readers know well since it was published by New City Press was the autobiography of Matteo Silvan. It was the interesting story of a married man deeply immersed and interested in the secular world, the story of a focolarino. This fascinating book starts where the other ended, the death of Teresa, his wife, and with the beginning of a new chapter in his life.* **Living City** *will publish it in installments.*

by Matteo Silvan

The sacred mystery

It is two o'clock in the afternoon. The day is full of sun, and Teresa is dying.

The moment has come, she has stopped breathing, she has left us! We are speechless, enveloped by a sentiment of infinite anguish. The silence of death contains a sense of absurdity. It is outside of time.

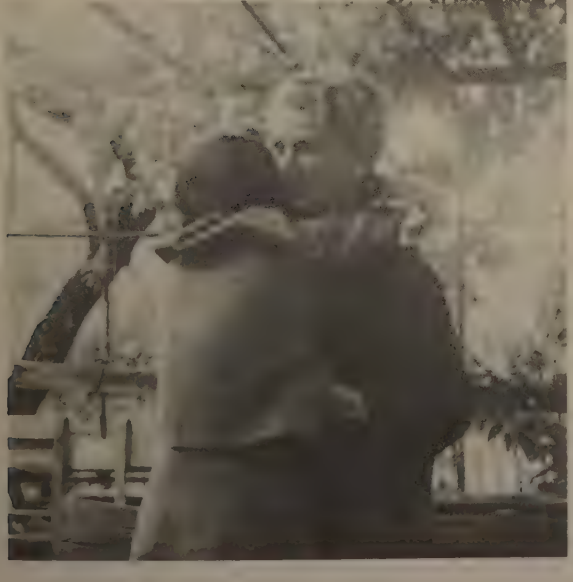
Sister Augusta who has been like a guardian angel for us in these two days of agony, waits for a few more minutes then, with a quick gesture, delicately closes Teresa's eyes forever. The silence in the hospital room becomes absolute. It is, however, a silence full of mystery, full of "reality."

Also the others in the other rooms along the corridor know what is happening. Sister Augusta slowly takes the wedding ring from Teresa's finger and gives it to me. I am surprised and hesitant. Then I decide to give my daughter Chiaretta the wedding band on my finger and put Teresa's on mine.

The writing engraved inside the ring captures my attention: June 8, 1931. Today is April 18, 1977. Forty-six years have passed. A wonderful dream is over but to come out of it is like beginning another dream. I feel as if I were lost in space yet all engrossed by this sacred mystery which binds life and death and unfolds itself before me. Chiaretta has her face in her hands. She suffers deeply; for her, mother is not here anymore, and she doesn't want to hear of anything else. Lucia, my other daughter, is standing on the other side of the bed motionless. Her eyes are almost closed. Two days ago she was travelling along on the Pacific coast of North America. We reached her by phone and she flew from Vancouver to Rome via the polar route. She arrived just in time to see her mother before she died. With us, silent and deeply moved, is also Giuliana, a friend of Teresa.

I have learned to believe that God is love. I have thought also of death with the serenity of those who look upon things from the point of view of heaven. I have tried to see myself and others as God sees us: sparks of life that in the infinity of space and time are enkindled, shine forth and immediately die out. Sparks which have meaning only if in the moment given to them they are truly resplendent and shed light. Teresa was one of these sparks.

I had thought I would die first and instead, suddenly, death has come for her, the per-



son I most loved. She is now before me with a beauty that makes you think of the light of heaven. For years she lived in the awareness that she could die at any moment. Yet she kept all things in her heart and remained serene, without even a shadow of sadness in her countenance. Thus she made of her life a journey towards sanctity. At first she had moved with caution along the way of the Gospel; but having then quickened her pace she was the first to reach the finish line. When Someone knocked at the door asking for her, she hastened to meet Him: she was ready.

Teresa

It is dark outside. I am back home, alone. The others will be here later. I feel lost as I look around me. The sense of emptiness envelopes me in the absurd silence of my home. Exhausted I drop in the armchair next to Teresa's bed. How many times I kept watch over her. Little by little, however, I find new strength and I begin to think of the mystery enveloping everything, both life and death. And this for awhile gives me relief. But suffering reappears and my heart cries out in anguish: "Everything is gone." "No, life goes on," a voice within me seems to insistently repeat. Hope and pain surface in my heart while the mystery remains. Finally comes the surrender: "My God, my God ... not my will but your will be done." With this I experience in the depth of my soul a sense of peace, of newness. Now I can recollect myself, I can think, I can remember.

Almost as if reliving reality in a dream, my mind goes back to the time of my first encounter with Teresa. How different we were when we first met. I was from a little town in Umbria, she from the mountains of Piedmont. We instinctively felt attracted to one another precisely because we were so different.

I liked her because she was not like other young women I had met. She was simple, she was serious, she was strong. At that time she used to accompany her brother, a doctor, on horseback as he visited his patients in the mountains. She was his nurse when necessary.

She was a woman of few words but what she did say was relevant. She would let me talk and I loved it. At the end, just a *yes* from her would make me happy. Even her *no's* were good for me because I always had to acknowledge her common sense and grasp of reality which I lacked. ►

Matteo and Teresa
steps of a life

When we began to speak of engagement and then of marriage I couldn't readily make up my mind. Yet I remember thinking that she was the better judge ... "If she marries me," I decided, "it is a sign that all will go well."

As the years went by, however, I began to suffer for what I considered excessive prudence on her part and a certain lack of enthusiasm and daring in life. My profession often kept me away from home and I would write to her about everything going on in me in letters of two, three, at times, four pages. She would always answer immediately, but with, at most, twelve lines.

During the war, our situation became very painful. As an expert in financial matters I found myself travelling alot also abroad. More than ever at that time I felt the need to communicate. Answering my four pages filled with pain and nostalgia she would still respond with her usual one page, adding however, at the end: "I love you." It was the maximum expression of her feelings. And who knows how much it cost her....

An episode of the war comes to mind. I had been away for a very long period of time, much longer than I had expected. Naturally I felt the need to give and receive news, and find out what was happening with the family. Yet all postal service had been cut off. I knew I could use the telephone but it wasn't easy to get a line. Finally after many attempts I heard the voice of the operator of our Foreign Ministry notifying me: "We've gotten through to your home." The phone rang, my heart was pounding, there was Teresa on the other line:
—Who is calling? she said.
—It's me.
—Oh, really. What's happening? I almost dropped the phone. Was that a question to ask? I was calling to tell her I was alive and was about to return home. I thought she would jump for joy, but she didn't. Calmly she went ahead and brought me up to date about the children and school. Everyone was well with the exception of grandma....

Being Woman

A few years after the end of the war, I encountered the Focolare Movement and was attracted by its spirituality. I won't even attempt to explain it in a few words. Its key word, which makes it different from other spiritualities in the Church, is unity just as poverty would be the key word for the Franciscan spirituality, obedience for that of St. Ignatius of Loyola, etc. Unity, therefore, for the Focolare, unity in all expressions of Christian life, directing them towards the fulfillment of Jesus' last prayer, "Father, may they all be one."

This encounter changed the direction of my existence and obviously also changed the direction of my life at home. I was happy, yet, I still found it hard to accept Teresa's reserved manner. I knew it was part of her personality but it seemed impossible to me that she couldn't be warmer in the way she expressed herself.

One day I shared my secret pain with a friend in the Movement. I noticed that he knew how to look at life in the light of the Gospel. The few words he told me were enough to open new horizons for my heart and mind. "You would want to have a different Teresa," he said. "The point is that she is like this because she has been created like this. Love her, therefore, the way she is. Do you want to question God's creation? You, yourself, told me that you liked her precisely because you saw she was much wiser than others, and more reserved as well. What is it that you want, then? Try to love her more, to help her to be more consciously herself. You will end up discovering the treasure which is hidden under her silence."

I was shaken. He was absolutely right. There was more wisdom in the simple reflections of my young friend than in all the books I had at home. From that day on, everything changed and changed radically. I learned how to accept Teresa the way she was while she—having embraced the same spirituality I had—was doing her best to make me happy with her smile.

Finally, harmony between us became perfect. We experienced a tenderness for one another unknown up to that time. Then Teresa's health began to deteriorate. In the evening she would retire early. Before we fell asleep, however, we would pray the rosary together. I would start and she would answer in a whisper. When we finished, before I gave her a good-

night kiss I would pause, almost as if in contemplation of this creature of God, all recollected in silence and in the mystery of her being woman. I saw in her the woman, in fact, who, having become a mother, witnessed the silent blossoming of life—Life, I mean—its growth, its coming to light, in a few months retracing the ultra-millenary itinerary of creation from the first *yes,* up to now. Creation, the woman, the child! It boggles the mind. A woman then is always a mother, also when she is more similar to angels in bringing into the world, the joy and the beauty of a spiritual life. In fact, she is more so a mother in this case, because she can "embrace" the earth to its last boundaries. And I would like to speak about another mother: humble and high more than all creatures who having lived with her Son the agony of the cross and the anguish of abandonment, has become, even for those who are not aware of it, the Mother. But I dare not speak of a topic so sublime.

"I have tried to see myself and others as God sees us: sparks of life that in the infinity of space and time are enkindled, shine forth and immediately die out. Sparks which have meaning only if in the moment given to them they are truly resplendent and shed light. Teresa was one of these sparks."

A pleasing sacrifice

Teresa was not only the mother of her own daughters. Many people with problems and all kinds of difficulties used to come to see her. They considered her their own mother because she had the capacity of making everyone feel welcome and understood. So I was contemplating her with infinite tenderness especially now that I saw her growing older. It was spontaneous to think of the years we spent together. I saw her as the spouse who had suffered with me and oftentimes because of me. We had spent a lifetime together. for years she had nourished herself on the Eucharist and now she herself had become in my eyes a pleasing sacrifice offered to God each day, in great serenity. She wasn't telling me now like she had done many years ago in a moment of serious illness, "Pray because I don't want to die." Now she was ready. Twenty years of a journey following Jesus' footsteps had sanctified her. That perhaps explained the desire I felt within me to kneel by her bed almost as if in the effort to penetrate more deeply the mystery of her silent suffering. Of course, I wouldn't dare do so nor had I the courage to ask her what she thought. I felt that suffering is sacred; it comes from God and leads us to God.

Oftentimes Francesco, our grandson, would come and spend a few days with us. He was a child then and he adored his grandma. In the evening when he realized that in our bedroom we were praying the rosary, he would jump out of bed and come to say it with us. He would walk back and forth with his hands behind his back trying to imitate me. The best part was at the end. He knew that the conclusion of the evening would be the goodnight kiss. After the last "amen" he would run to be first to kiss grandma on both cheeks and beat me to it. One evening, I expressed to him my "jealousy" and suggested we come to an agreement. We decided, therefore, that he would kiss her on the right cheek and I on the left. From then on, things worked out pretty well. After the last "amen" we would race each other but now we knew what to do. As we each raced to our appointed side, the "victim" would smile in submission. I think those were the happiest moments of her life. Now that many years have gone by I realize that those were the happiest days for me and also for Francesco. The love binding us was not only human. Francesco, our grandson, in fact, had shown himself to be, ever since he was very young, very sensitive to what we can call a supernatural life. Now that grandma is gone, I see him serene; and I will try to do the best I can to make sure that he finds in me, at least in part, the love that he thinks he has lost. □

(Continued)

HAMMARSKJÖLD champion of peace

Dag Hammarskjold, one of the most enlightened political thinkers of our time was killed under dramatic circumstances just over 25 years ago. As head of the United Nations he faced explosive world situations with a foresight rooted in faith.

by Hermann J. Benning

On September 17, 1961, Dag Hammarskjold, then Secretary-General of the United Nations, lost his life in an airplane accident over the Congo during a peace mission. The true cause of his death has never come to light. His body was found nearly intact the following day beside the wreckage of his chartered UN plane which had been burned and looted. The corpse of his bodyguard was found riddled with bullets.

Throughout the world, this statesman who had dedicated his entire life to the cause of peace, was mourned. That same year he was posthumously awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

To all appearances, Hammarskjold's career was one of uninterrupted success from the beginning. He was born into a Swedish aristocratic family on July 25, 1905. After studies in political economics and law he entered government service in 1932. At thirty-one years of age he became under-secretary of State for Financial Affairs. Soonafter he was called on to serve in Sweden's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From 1953 until his death in 1961 he served as Secretary-General of the United Nations Organization. The UN, founded in 1945, was still a new organization and was being challenged and

United Nations

tested on every side. Trygve Lie, his predecessor, told him as he handed over the post: "You are taking over the most impossible job in the world." The job, however, was as difficult as the man assuming it was exceptional.

After his death, his diary, *Markings*, was published revealing a little known side of this political figure. In his notes he called his diary "a sort of white book concerning my negotiations with myself and with God." The book allows us to enter in and glimpse the inner struggles of the man; his sense of personal unworthiness notwithstanding many brilliant gifts, his search for meaning in life. Among its pages we find that his unreserved acceptance of life and untiring dedication to peace among peoples were founded on an unconditioned *yes* to God. A *yes* that allowed him to overcome the painful doubts, his own limitations and the hostility directed toward him. As he wrote in 1961: "At some moment I did answer *yes* to Someone—or Something—and from that hour I was certain that existence is meaningful and that, therefore, my life, in self-surrender, had a goal," and in 1952: "What I ask for is absurd: that life shall have a meaning. What I strive for is impossible: that my life shall acquire a meaning." From page to page we can trace the transition from despair over himself to faith in God.

Readers of his diary might well be surprised that among the 500 entries there are no direct references to the political and historical events he lived so deeply, or to the world leaders he dealt with. His is really a spiritual diary, an intellectual testament.

In his rare free moments he read extensively. He was familiar with the great mystics of the middle ages as well as with the works of Claudel, Bloy, Peguy and T.S. Eliot. He loved nature and mountaineering.

Running like a leit motif throughout his diary entries are the themes of love and service: "To love life and men as God loves them: for the sake of

photo courtesy United Nations

(right) September 15, 1961. During the fatal peace mission to the Congo (now Zaire) two days before his death. (below) Mountaineering in New Zealand.

their infinite possibilities, to wait like Him, to judge like Him without passing judgment, to obey the order when it is given and never look back—then He can use you—then, *perhaps* He will use you. And if He doesn't use you—what matter. In His hand, every moment has its meaning, its greatness, its glory, its peace, its co-inherence."

In his first statement before the plenary session of the UN General Assembly after his appointment in 1953 he said: "I am here to serve you all. I am animated by a desire to meet all problems with an open mind. It is for you to judge how I succeed, it is for you to correct me if I fail."

photo courtesy United Nations

We find a notation along the same vein in 1952: "There is no one from whom one cannot learn. Before God who speaks to every man, one is always at the first syllable."

Hammarskjold suffered from loneliness all his life. In an entry again from 1952 he writes: "Pray that your loneliness may spur you into finding something to live for, great enough to die for."

There were critics who cast their doubts on the UN's ability to carry out its mission in the face of the ongoing international power struggles. Many prophecied it would undergo a demise as rapid as that of the League of Nations in the 1930's. But if the UN was creating a reputation for itself as a force for peace during the Cold War years it was largely due to the extraordinary work of Hammarskjold in consolidating the fledgling world organization. As Wilder Foote says in his book *The Servant of Peace,* "He was constantly exploring and testing ways of making multi-lateral diplomacy better serve the goals of reconciliation ... by reducing the weight of public propraganda and increasing the element of genuine private negotiation." Hammarskjold had told the General Assembly in his acceptance speech in 1953, "Ours is a work of reconciliation and realistic construction."

His hallmark was a "quiet diplomacy" whether it was in the Suez Crisis of 1956, the Hungarian uprising the same year, involvement in the Palestinian question, problems in south-east Asia, or in the Congo. His personal gift of persuasiveness and his "compelling integrity," as it was referred to, were put to use for world peace. His was not a timid neutrality: he did not hesitate to battle for peace and justice even with the super powers. The American historian, Erich Goldman, wrote that he did not have to serve either East or West because he served God.

On March 30, 1956 we find in his diary a quote from Blaise Pascal that says something about the motivation behind his working to the limits of physical and mental endurance: "Jesus will be in agony even to the end of the world. We must not sleep during that time."

In the last ten years of his life, the thought of death as an offering occupied his mind with growing intensity. In 1952 he wrote: "The hardest thing of all—to die rightly.—An exam

(Continued on page 28)

At one time or another we have all wished we could stop time. Speaking to a group of children years ago Chiara Lubich shared with them a solution she found: "to live the present moment well, with all one's heart, mind, soul and strength, letting go of everything that is not the will of God thereby making of each action a beautifully wrapped package presentable to God."

"Today" is a column in which we share experiences reflecting the efforts of people to live this experience of making the most of the moments which fill the day. They just might help us all to live days that will remain forever.

Today, I was on my way to pick up my husband from the train after work. As I entered the station, I saw that the entrance I usually take to an area where I can wait for him was blocked by a lady in a car. Obviously she too was waiting for a train.

I motioned that I needed to pass around her, expecting that she would reverse her car and let me by, but she clearly did not want to move! I felt annoyed because it was an awkward area to back out of. My reaction would have normally been to blow the car horn and roll down the window to let her know that she was blocking a public entrance but something stopped me. I remembered how I had tried to love Jesus in my neighbor that day, to be an instrument of unity in each encounter and I realized that I was about to contradict all these efforts.

I smiled at her and gestured that I would reverse. This took a few minutes and I was tempted to start judging this lady again but I wanted to do all my part and asked Mary to help me love this neighbor, too, with all my heart. As I drove away, I felt a great peace inside.

The train pulled into the station and I saw my husband struggle to get off, loaded with a couple of brief cases and several packages. Another gentleman noticed this and went over to help him to my car. As they got nearer I recognized this man as someone who lives near us, but whom I hadn't met yet. He introduced himself and turned around to introduce his wife who had come to meet him. She turned out to be the lady from my "encounter" of a few minutes earlier.

This small experience showed me how awkward this meeting might have been had I let the "old man" take over, and reinforced for me the value of listening well to the little voice within that continually prompts us to love in each present moment!

M.D.

During spring break from school, the children's energy levels were running high. Turmoil was constant in the household, and things reached such a point one day that I saw the need to pray for peace within our family. Almost before I started, though, I knew the the solution would be in loving always no matter what. I made the decision to really try to love in all the difficult moments with the children. After doing this, I can't really say whether the children were more or less calm than before, but I do know that the day passed much more peacefully for me.

In addition to relating with the children, I also spent time working on arrangements to accompany my husband on an upcoming business trip to Washington, D.C. Everything was working out beautifully. I had in the past tried to make these trips with him, but each time some difficulty arose to keep me from going. This time, however, things were really falling into place and when my hus-

band came home that evening, I happily told him that it looked like I would be able to go with him. When I saw his reaction, I immediately knew something was wrong. I realized that I had assumed too much and from a business standpoint, it was not a good time for me to go along with him. I understood, but I was very disappointed. As a fruit, though, of having loved in the little episodes all day long with the children, I was able to continue loving also now and help my husband not to feel bad for the fact that I could not go with him. I saw at the end of that difficult day how trying to love always led to unity in our little family, and how it is love that remains.

M.M.

One Monday morning, as I was entering the school building, I felt like turning right around and going home. It is not that I *run* into work each day, but for some strange reason, on this particular day I really felt like not being there.

I signed in as usual and then went into the teachers' room to put my lunch away. As I entered, I remembered that, on Friday the week before, my students went on a field trip with another teacher in order to participate in a state-wide language tournament. Since we were just returning from a weekend and the students had not come back from the tournament until late on Friday, I

still hadn't heard what the results were.

I immediately approached the teacher who went with my students, thinking she might have good news for me. As I walked toward her I could see disappointment in her eyes. "Your kids were very well-behaved," she said sadly, "but none of them placed." I thanked her for going with them anyway and then I asked, "How about your students?" She then told me about one of her students who came in first place in one of the events. With a somewhat heavy heart I congratulated her. I went to my classroom and felt even more down than before.

Suddenly I remembered Jesus Forsaken.[1] "This suffering is an encounter with him," I said to myself. "So we failed. He felt like a failure, too! I immediately said *yes* to him in the suffering of my students losing the tournament, *yes* to the heaviness I was experiencing inside. Then I thought, "I still have to come out of myself and love. Right now I can love the other teacher concretely by announcing to the entire school about her student's win. If it were me, I would like it if someone else did this for *my* student."

So I went to our supervisor and asked her if it would be all right to have the winning announced to the entire school over the P.A. system. She agreed and said she would take care of it.

I returned to my classroom feeling better because of what I had done. As I took attendance in my classroom, the announcements began to come over the P.A. system. I was jolted to hear, "Congratulations to the foreign language students of ..." with my name announced along with my students' names. I was truly embarrassed. As I started to leave the room to tell the announcer there had been an error I looked up towards the back of the classroom. There were my students who had participated in the tournament along with my supervisor and the other language teacher. They were all screaming, "Ha ha, we played a trick on you. *We* won first place! We wanted to surprise you!"

I could hardly believe my ears. I ran over to the crowd in the back and we all embraced, and congratulated one another. But I rejoiced not only because of our win but because I had been faithful to Jesus. It seems he really tested the teacher and this time the teacher passed!

K.G.

1) Refers to Jesus on the cross when he cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me."

"After all, you have died! Your life is hidden now with Christ in God" (Col 3:3).

The word makes us live.

The word makes us free.

The word guarantees happiness.

The word converts.

The word purifies us.

The word draws us to our specific vocations.

The word brings forth the hatred of the world and the sanctity of the disciple.

The word makes us see the truth.

The word brings comfort.

The word gives us joy.

The word produces works.

The word gives wisdom.

The word preserves us from human concerns.

The word obtains everything.

The word brings about union with God.

The word gives us hope of eternal life.

The word makes us one.

The word changes one's mentality.

The word makes each soul a heaven.

"After all, you have died! Your life is hidden now with Christ in God." (Col 3:3).

This word of life so powerful and to the point presents us with the fundamental law of the entire Christian life.

Through our baptism we are dead to the world and sin and risen to a new life. Christ dwells within us and we have made our choice: to live for him.

For St. Paul to "have died" meant that the world, that is, our former way of life with its mentality, erroneous ways, and enticements should no longer exist for us. They should no longer hold sway over us because we should be living on another level, that of the Risen Christ. The Christian should now wholly belong to him, and his life of grace.

"After all, you have died! Your life is hidden now with Christ in God."

Notwithstanding, however, the new reality given to us in baptism, the tendency towards evil still exists in us. All our collaboration is essential so that the life of grace can win out over it.

This total death to the world and to ourselves is a goal to be aimed at; it is a finish line that requires a long journey before it is reached.

For this reason the choice that baptism implies must be renewed everyday. Each day we make the resolution to say no to ourselves so that Christ may live in us.

"After all, you have died! Your life is hidden now with Christ in God."

The more we try to die to ourselves and to the world, the more the life of Jesus will grow in us. His light and his love will fill our mind and heart always more. We will have an always greater interior freedom, We will do good, and gain a totally new joy.

In proportion to how much the life of Jesus grows in us the world will be less attractive and it will become always easier and almost natural to say no to its propositions.

What St. Paul is telling us in this word of life will be always truer for us: we will "die" and our life will be hidden with Christ in God. The world with its deceptive enticements and promises will no longer matter to us. We will have lost interest in it. Only Jesus will matter to us. Our joy will be to be in him, to work for his kingdom, to participate in his marvelous life. His is a life that the world cannot see and cannot unders-

tand but which will one day manifest itself in all its beauty.

"After all, you have died! Your life is hidden now with Christ in God."

What should we do to live this word of life?

First of all, let's not be surprised if we find that there are still many tendencies in us not as yet submissive to Jesus' will. Instead let's take the opportunity to humbly recognize our weakness before him and ask him to be the one to win out in us. We can be certain that it will happen. Only his grace can remove the roots of the unruly inclinations still present in our heart.

And then, of course, we must do our part well. This implies that we try not to listen to the world's suggestions, that we not expose ourselves to temptations and cut with all occasions of sin.

And let us live his Word, primarily the one that summarizes them all: the commandment of love of neighbor. Let's make the effort to serve Jesus in our neighbor always better. This is the way to reach that mortification which is most pleasing to Jesus.

Love for others is the most concrete way to die to ourselves so that Christ may grow in us.

Chiara Lubich

EXPERIENCES

The following are experiences in living the Gospel which some of our readers shared with us.

A chance arrived

I work in a nursing home. All our patients need attention and one in particular is known for her chronic pain because it seems to come and go at a moment's notice. It is hard for me to handle this kind of pain; in fact, each time I see this patient coming down the hall I have to remind myself that a chance to love Jesus is arriving. With each occasion comes a whole new effort.

One morning, when I got to work for the 7:00 a.m. shift, I was told that this patient was complaining of pain in her knee. I went in to see her.

She had refused to eat breakfast and was now sitting in a chair, crying. I asked the staff to keep tabs on her while I did a quick check on the status of the other patients. The nurse's aide brought her tea but again she refused to take anything. I went back to her room to check her knee. It seemed that maybe this time she really *was* in pain; perhaps the doctor really should see her.

I called him, we set up an appointment, and I hurried back to double-check several other patients. A few minutes later I found her walking peacefully around her room, in no apparent pain. Her knee, it seemed, was fine.

At this point, I felt like throwing in the towel with this patient. There have been too many occasions like this before. I went to cancel the doctor's appointment, telling myself all the way that I had to *try* to live the word of life. It was pretty clear, "May the Lord be generous in increasing your love and make you love one another and the whole human race."

This was obviously my chance. I went back into her room. Again, she was in her chair, in tears, asking once more to be sent to the hospital. At that moment I felt anything but generous, but I remembered that the generosity was the Lord's part and I had better do mine: I had to try to love. It occurred to me that what she perhaps *did* need was for someone to listen to her. I sat down determined that she have a chance to get everything out of her system. We were there a long time. Everything she had been harboring inside was aired and, in the end, she was smiling and actually able to sleep. I, too, was happy because she had helped me to love.

S.M.

On being self-sufficient

Usually I am a strong, healthy, energetic person. However, due to some minor surgery and a shortened recovery time before returning to the fast pace of my daily life, I found myself getting tired very easily. I felt shaky and weak, but I was also determined to keep up my front of well-being. However, I could not fool my friends who knew that I was not as strong as I would have them think.

A few weeks after surgery, I was helping renovate an old house. One of my friends, who has more experience at such work, was overseeing the progress. When it came to assigning different tasks each day she would give me lighter jobs, requiring much less muscle and energy than the jobs the rest of the group had. Every time this happened, I felt embarrassed and frustrated; I would insist that I really could do more. My friend listened patiently to my protests but would then still ask me to do some lighter task. For two straight days I found myself doing everything half-heartedly.

Then I remembered the lesson from the gospel, "Should anyone press you into service for one mile, go with him two miles" (Mt 5:41). I thought to myself, "This means I have to love twice as much," but I realized I had not yet even gone the 'first mile' for my friend. It was suddenly clear that by giving me easier tasks, she was trying to help me regain my strength while at the same time include me in the work efforts of our group.

I decided that I wanted to return this love. The next morning when I was going again to be assigned an easier work load I smiled and did not complain. This was already hard for me to do, but it was the first mile! Then as I went about my tasks that day with my friends, I really tried to do each thing

On my way to get the paper

One Saturday, wrapped deeply in my own thoughts, I asked a waitress in a restaurant near the university for some change to buy a newspaper. I was jarred from my reverie when someone called out my name. I looked, and I faintly recognized the person but I could not think of his name. He realized that I was having a problem but only said that we had been together in a half-way house where he was a resident and I was one of the counselors. I told him that I was just going out front to get a paper and I would be right back. When I went outside I remembered who exactly he was and the memories flooded back....

It was very hot in Detroit during the summer of 1972. My supervisor asked me to check on one of the residents who had not been seen for several days. I went to his floor and knocked on his door. He opened it a crack. I asked him to come to the day room. I remember how hot that room was. Someone had turned off the air conditioner and it was like an oven. I sat down and waited for Guy to come in. He appeared in the doorway with a sweater on that was much too long. The sleaves almost reached to the ends of his fingers. He was pale; ash white would be a better description. I asked if everything was all right and he said he didn't feel well. I got up and touched his forehead. He didn't seem to have a fever. I reached down to take his pulse and he pulled his arm away. It didn't connect right away. I told Guy he could go back to his room.

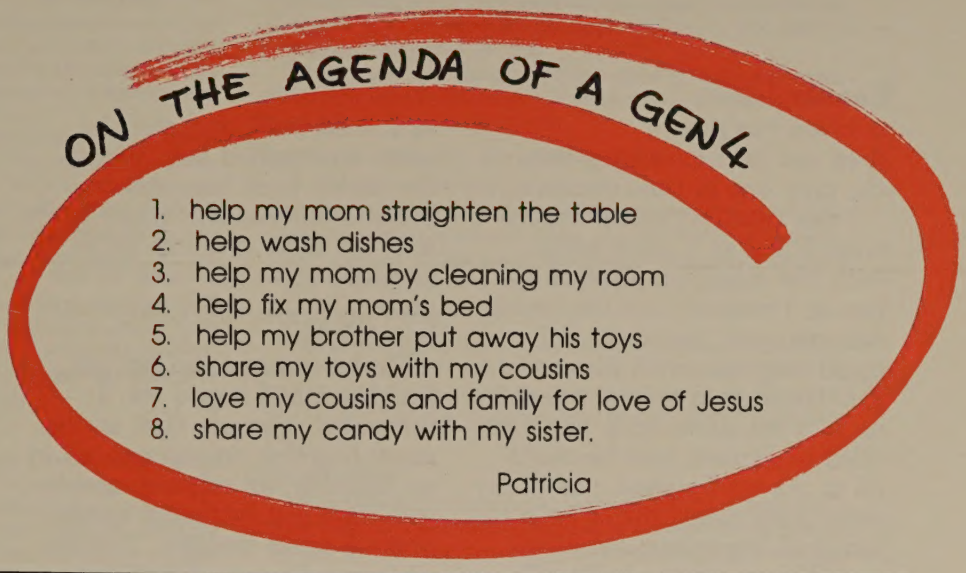
I sat down trying to figure what was wrong with him. In a matter of seconds I knew exactly what it was. One of the other residents was passing by and I asked him if he would ask Guy to come back to the day room. Before he returned I knew that I had to be a new person for him. I had to be empty so he would be free to say what was wrong. I wanted to be love and nothing but love for him so that it could be Jesus' love he experienced. I tried to put myself in that attitude and hoped I would remain in it.

Guy once again appeared in the doorway. I asked him to sit down. He sat as far from me as

well out of love. This was the second mile.

After awhile I realized I was actually happy doing these things and I understood that I do not always have to be strong in order to love.

C.S.


ON THE AGENDA OF A GEN4
1. help my mom straighten the table
2. help wash dishes
3. help my mom by cleaning my room
4. help fix my mom's bed
5. help my brother put away his toys
6. share my toys with my cousins
7. love my cousins and family for love of Jesus
8. share my candy with my sister.
Patricia

possible. I gently asked Guy if he would show me his wrists. He just stared at me with an open mouth. He said, "How do you know?"

Like a little child (Guy was seventeen at the time) he pulled back the sleeves. Both wrists had been cut, not once but several times. The thing to do was to get him to a hospital to be sutured. He said that there was blood on the floor of his room and that he wanted to clean it up before going anywhere. I told him to just relax, I would take care of it.

I went to Guy's room with a bucket of water and a sponge. There was blood splattered on the floor. I knelt down to wipe it up. I remember saying to myself, "This is you, Jesus Forsaken, it is you I love. I am happy to do this so that Guy will never feel so abandoned and alone."

As I was cleaning up another young resident came by. We had been having some difficulty with him. He said to me, "Who ever stays in this room probably needs you more right now. I'll finish this." I thanked him and asked him for the keys to his car since at that point I had no way of getting Guy to the hospital except by cab. He reached in his pocket and handed me his keys with a smile.

When Guy and I arrived at the emergency room they put us in an area that was only separated by drape partitions. Guy and I could hear the doctor on the other side. From his tone it was easy to tell he was angry. He was being verbally abusive to the person he was working with. From the conversation both Guy and I understood that the person the doctor was with was a suicide attempt, as well. A look of terror came over Guy's face. He became frantic. I put my hand on his shoulder and he calmed down.

The doctor pulled back the curtain looked at Guy and yelled, "Another one!" Then he looked at me. I smiled. He gave his full attention to Guy. He talked gently but matter of factly to him. He told me that he had to report this and that Guy would have to see a hospital social worker. I told him that would be no problem and explained where we were from. Since Guy already had a social worker at the half-way house the doctor asked if the social worker could come back with him when he came to have the sutures removed.

Interestingly enough this doctor eventually volunteered his time, two to three hours a week, to take care of the medical needs of our residents.

Now Guy and I sat and talked over breakfast in this restaurant. He told me about all he had done and gone through over the past fourteen years since that time. He then said, "About the suicide attempt?" I nodded my head. "I want you to know that was the first time I felt loved and loved without being judged. Remembering how you cared has carried me through some very difficult times since then. I have often thought if I could love as you loved me, someone else could experience a new meaning to love."

We exchanged telephone numbers. I have since seen some of Guy's paintings. Some of them speak of love.

J.K.

Family life

(Continued from page 11)

dred per cent as if they were the only one in that moment.

I can recall a typical experience. One day I came home with the intention of resting but as I walked into the house our youngest asked me if I could help him with his model car. He wanted to put wheels on it. I sat down with him and tried to explain how he could do it. As we finished, one of my other sons asked me to help him pull the motor out of his car. We got all the bolts off and jacked up the car and did the job which must have taken another 45 minutes. I was full of grease. I went into the house to clean myself up and another one of my sons asked me if I could help him with his guitar. He had broken the neck of it and he wanted me to help him fix it. We decided he could try to put the neck of another guitar on it. As he walked away the littlest one came back to say that he just could not make an axle. I went to the basement and got a tiny little drill for the axle so we could put wheels on the car. As soon as I went back upstairs the other son needed help to put the motor back into the car. When I entered the house there was one more problem to be worked out on the neck of the guitar. In the end it came out beautifully.

That evening I did not get the rest I had hoped for. I remember, though, that we sat down together for supper, all of us together, all relaxed, and it was the most beautiful atmosphere I could imagine. I realized it was because I had put aside all my plans and ideas to make myself one with each of the children. Not only did each of them feel loved but among them there was a beautiful relationship.

Terry: Each child is so different. Ours went through their adolescent years at different times and in different ways. It has been a challenge to treat each one as they need to be treated. I think that trying to live like focolarini[2] we tried to make ourselves one with each of them, and love them as they needed to be loved. Steve and I had our shortcomings as parents, our blind spots, our faults but in time we grew in our ability to love them. At least it has been this way for me. The more I understand who Jesus Forsaken[3] is in my life, the more I understand how to love as Jesus loved, how to let go and be nothing out of love, and then the more I'm able to understand and relate to each child. I'm sure Steve feels the same way. That they had such different personalities didn't matter. We tried not to force on them the same choice we had made for our life. We felt they would learn by how they saw us live rather than our telling them how they should act. Children can feel the relationship their parents have with God and my being able to help them has it roots in that relationship. Some of them are away from home now but the unity among us is deep and real. □

1) The youth of the Focolare Movement. See inside back cover for more details. 2) See inside back cover for more information on the focolarini. 3) Refers to Jesus' suffering on the cross when he cried out, "My God, my God why have you forsaken me"?

Hammarskjold: champion of peace:

(Continued from page 21)

nobody is spared—and how many pass it? And you? You pray for strength to meet the test—but also for leniency on the part of the Examiner." And in 1953: "In the last analysis, what does the word "sacrifice" mean? Or even the word "gift"? He who has nothing can give nothing. The gift is God's—to God."

Shortly after his appointment as Secretary-General, Hammarskjold wrote for a radio program of Edward R. Murrow's, and with this we conclude our brief look at Hammarskjold's life: "... the explanation of how man should live a life of active social service in full harmony with himself as a member of the community of the spirit, I found in the writings of those great medieval mystics for whom "self-surrender" had been the way to self-realization, and who in "singleness of mind" and "inwardness" had found strength to say *yes* to every demand which the needs of their neighbors made them face, and to say *yes* also to every fate life had in store for them....

"Love—that much misused and misinterpreted word—for them meant simply an overflowing of the strength with which they felt themselves filled when living in true self-oblivion. And this love found natural expression in an unhesitant fulfillment of duty and an unreserved acceptance of life, whatever it brought them personally of toil, suffering—or happiness." □

What is the Focolare Movement?

THE BEGINNINGS

FOCOLARE means "hearth," "family fireside." What first strikes people when they come in contact with members of the Focolare, whether in small groups or in large gatherings, is the atmosphere of a family. It is a family formed by many different people in various walks of life. The Focolare Movement is also known as the "Work of Mary." Under this name it was approved by Pope John XXIII in 1962.

The Focolare Movement began in 1943 in Italy. In the midst of the terrible destruction of World War II, Chiara Lubich realized that God is the only one worth living for. As a result, she began to center her life on the Gospel, together with a small group of young women who followed her. Their ideal became one of striving toward the fulfillment of Jesus' last prayer to the Father: "May they all be one" (Jn.17:21).

The life of Chiara and her first companions, and the spiritual way they spontaneously followed, gave rise to the unique form of spirituality of the Focolare Movement, a spirituality of unity. It has proved to be a powerful means of introducing the Gospel into modern life, of going to God together.

WHO ARE THE FOCOLARINI

Single men and women live in separate communities called Focolare Centers. Their principal aim is to achieve unity among themselves through mutual charity practiced twenty-four hours a day. They follow the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. They work as other laymen and women in regular jobs and professions.

Some married persons, even though continuing to live in their families, participate fully in the life of either the men's or women's Focolare Centers in their common effort to achieve this same unity. They are called "Married Focolarini" and form the backbone of a vast Movement within the Movement, called the New Family Movement.

THE VOLUNTEERS AND THE NEW HUMANITY MOVEMENT

The Volunteers, also called the "Volunteers of God," are a large group within the Focolare Movement; they would like to transform all human realities according to the Gospel spirit. The Volunteers are the backbone of the mass movement called New Humanity. The aim of this Movement is to help form a society made of men and women who are made "new" by the Gospel message and who can then bring new life to all fields of human activity (education, business, etc.). This results in new social relationships which, in turn, lead to the realization of new structures of society.

GEN

The new generations of the Focolare Movement form another Movement or, better, three movements: the Gen 2, the Gen 3 and the Gen 4 Movements, divided according to their various age groups. "Gen" stands for new generation. The Gen have committed themselves to living the Gospel message of love and to sharing with other youth the conviction they have that the Gospel is the answer to every question and the motive for everything they do.

THE MOVEMENT AMONG THE RELIGIOUS

Men and women religious — although they live according to their own rules and constitutions and are already a distinct part of the Church through their religious families — can also be associated with the Focolare.

Contact with the Movement helps them to focus their attention on the specific charism of their founders, and to see how it can be lived in the present time.

PRIESTS — PRIESTS' MOVEMENT —SEMINARIANS — PARISH MOVEMENT

Many diocesan priests are committed to living the spirituality of the Focolare Movement. Some of them live in community. They form the backbone of the Priests' Movement which is made up of priests who live the spirituality of unity.

FOCOLARE FAMILY

The largest group within the Focolare Movement is made up of men, women and young people who are connected with the Movement without having any formal ties with it. Their bond of unity stems from their acceptance of its spirit and their desire to live it.

ECUMENISM

The Movement not only crossed the political boundaries of more than 100 countries, it has also gone beyond the barriers erected for centuries between the various Christian Churches.

Ecumenical activities take place in the different parts of the world where the Movement exists.

In the past few years a promising, ongoing dialogue has been established with faithful of other religions.

SUMMER MARIAPOLIS

Summer meetings are held every year for those interested in the Movement and for those who wish to come into contact with it. For one week persons of all ages and walks of life are exposed to the spirituality of unity. Above all, they strive to practice it by creating among themselves a rapport that molds them into a community. It is intended to be a basic experience of such intense unity that the people will be able to bring it back into their own environments. And this is the most striking fruit of these conventions. They tend to be models of a world which lives according the Gospel.

PERMANENT MARIAPOLIS

The need to prolong the experience of the summer meetings brought about the birth of small cities called Permanent Mariapolis. They are made up of young men and women, as well as whole families, who are there for a designated period of time to be formed according to the Gospel spirit of unity.

They also attend classes in Sacred Scripture, Theology and Sociology and work for their own support.

MARIAPOLIS CENTERS

In addition to the Permanent Mariapolis, there are Mariapolis Centers, which are training centers for the members of the Movement.

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